

FA12/Intermedia II Unit II:: **Mapping**

Description

In the context of ever-increasing social and technological complexity, mapping has emerged as a major cultural motif as we seek to orient ourselves in both spatial and informational landscapes. In our daily lives, Google Maps and Google Earth guide us on journeys real and imagined, rendering mundane the God's eye aerial view that not too long ago was the sole purview of the government or military. In contemporary art and design, the term "mapping" describes a wide variety of practices related to understanding the experience of space and place or diagramming the complex and often abstract systems that order our lives. In this unit, we will explore mapping as metaphor and technique for creating spatially-informed works of art.

Reading

Nato Thompson, "In Two Directions: Geography as Art, Art as Geography" in *Experimental Geograpy*, ed. Nato Thompson (New York: Independent Curators International, 2008), 12-26

In-class screening

Jacqueline Goss, "There There Square" (2002 – available on vimeo at <https://vimeo.com/33001546>)
Ursula Biemann, "Remote Sensing" (2001 - available in the Intermedia XSAN Media Library)

Mini-Project: Vantage Points

Homework assignment

In a *dérive* one or more persons during a certain period drop their relations, their work and leisure activities, and all their other usual motives for movement and action, and let themselves be drawn by the attractions of the terrain and the encounters they find there. Chance is a less important factor in this activity than one might think: from a *dérive* point of view cities have psychogeographical contours, with constant currents, fixed points and vortexes that strongly discourage entry into or exit from certain zones.

-Guy Debord, "Theory of the *Dérive*" (1958)

Go for a walk with a classmate this weekend. Inspired by the Situationist technique of the *derive*, your walk should have a beginning but no pre-ordained ending. Instead, move according to the directives of the landscape and your own psychogeographic responses. Using your cell phone or a digital camera from the checkout pool, each student will document the walk in his/her own characteristic way. Upon returning from the walk, try to write down the route that you took. Place all the photographs (in folders labeled with the name of the person who took them) and the map/description of your route in the Instructor's Drop Box in a folder marked "mapping_name1name2" prior to the next class meeting.

In-Class Assignment

1. In pairs and in a large group, discuss the differences between the systems of representation employed by different individuals and groups.
2. Following a demonstration, you and your partner will collaboratively create a tour in Google Earth that reflects upon the walk and the varied representational techniques and spaces through which they are conveying it to an audience. Google Earth tours can be completed on their own time and will be presented in a "show and tell" format (without critique) in the following class.

Shared Presentation

Select one of the projects below and research as much as you can learn about it in one week's time. How does the project relate to the theme of mapping? What techniques does it use to make sense of space? What position does it appear to take to the questions of authority and power that are endemic to the abstract ordering of space in a map?

Unlike many of our other resource list, this list includes projects that are not, strictly speaking, art. They are included because they are influential to artists or represent a cultural history of mapping. Consult multiple sources, both on the Internet and in the Art Library (including digital databases) to develop a sense not just of what the project was and looked like but how it was received at the time and how it has entered into the (art) historical record. More recent works may have limited citations. Distill your research into a 5-7 minute explanation and add images, links, and notes to the shared Google Presentation.

Performance

- Vito Acconci, "Following Piece" (1969)
- On Kawara, "I Got Up At..." (1974-5)
- Hamish Fulton, "Seven Days Walking and Seven Nights Camping in a Wood Scotland March 1985" (1985)
- Francis Alÿs, "Paradox of Praxis" (1997)
- Allora & Calzadilla, "Landmark (Footprints)" (2001)
- Regina José Galindo, "¿Quién Puede Borrar las Huellas?" (2003)
- Futurefarmers, "This is Not a Trojan Horse" (2010)

Installation/Site-Specific

- Robert Smithson, "A Nonsite, Franklin New Jersey" (1968)
- Suzanne Lacy, "Three Weeks in May" (1977)
- Repohistory, "Lower Manhattan Sign Project" (1992)
- Christian Phillip Müller, "Green Border" (1993)
- Frances Whitehead, "Mapping the Lake in the Great Garden" (2004)
- Eve Andrée Laramée, "Fluid Geographies" (2007)
- kanarinka, "It Takes 154,000 Breaths to Evacuate Boston" (2007)
- Lize Mogel and Lex Bhagat, "Sharjah Infocart and CityMap" (2011)

Print/Zines/Multiples

- Victor H. Green, "The Negro Motorist's Green Book" (1936-1964)

William Bunge, "Detroit Geographic Expedition" (1968-1971)
Grupo de Arte Callejero, "Aqui Viven Genocidos" (2001)
Spatial Information Design Lab, "Million Dollar Blocks" (2005)
Counter-Cartographies Collective, "Disorientation Guide" (2006)
Brett Ian Balogh, "A Noospheric Atlas of the United States" (2009)
Center for Urban Pedagogy, "Know Your Lines" (2011)

Photo/Video

Robert Smithson and Nancy Holt, "Swamp" (1969)
Mark Klett, "Rephotographic Survey Project" (1977)
Richard Long, "Walking in a Circle in Mist" (1986)
Alex Villar, "Upward Mobility" (2002)
Multiplicy, "The Road Map" (2003)
Andrea Geyer, "Spiral Lands Chapter 1" (2007)
Trevor Paglen, "The Other Night Sky" (2007-2009)
Nate Larsen and Marni Shindelman, "Geolocation" (2009-2012)

New Media

Randall Packer and Ken Goldberg, "Mori" (1997)
Institute for Applied Autonomy, "ISee" (2001)
Thorsten Knaube, "GPS Diary" (2003)
Beatriz DaCosta, "Pigeon Blog" (2006)
Amy Balkin, "Invisible 5" (2006)
Spurse, "Crooked River" (2008)
Esther Polak, "NomadicMILK" (2007-2010)

Project Prompt

In the medium or media of your choice, create a project that addresses themes of wayfinding, mobility, and spatial representation. Your project should be site-specific – that is, take a specific place as its setting or subject – but it could easily be extendable to other spaces. In creating your project, pay especial attention to the question of whose 'vantage point' you are privileging and to what ends. If your project requires a field experience, let the instructor know as soon as possible so special arrangements can be made for the class to experience the work.

You will be graded on the criteria outlined in the syllabus. Due for critique in class September 17 and 19.